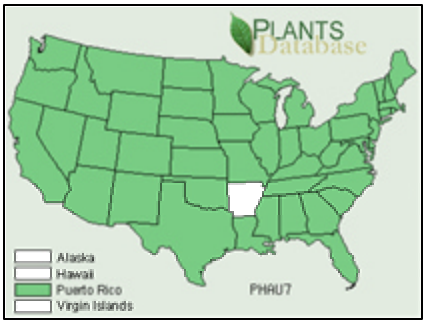
Common Reed

***Phragmites australis* Cav.**

Description: Common reed is a tall perennial wetland grass ranging in height from three to thirteen feet. Strong leathery horizontal shoots, called rhizomes, growing on or beneath the ground surface give rise to roots and tough vertical stalks. These stalks support broad sheath-type leaves that are one-half to two inches wide near the base, tapering to a point at the ends. The foliage is gray-green during the growing season, with purple-brown plumes appearing by late June. The plant turns tan in the fall and most leaves drop off, leaving only the plume-topped shoot.

Habitat: Common reed thrives in sunny wetland habitats. It grows along drier borders and elevated areas of brackish and freshwater marshes and along riverbanks and lakeshores. The species is particularly prevalent in disturbed or polluted soils found along roadsides, ditches and dredged areas.



Distribution: Found throughout the temperate regions of North America.

Threats: Common reed has become a destructive weed, quickly displacing desirable plants species such as wild rice, cattails, and native wetland orchids. Invasive stands of common reed eliminate diverse wetland plant communities, and provide little food or shelter for wildlife.

Control Options:

- **Mechanical/Physical** - Common reed can be cut and the rhizomes can be dug up but physical control is difficult because it can reestablish from seed or remaining rhizomes. Frequent mowing is sometimes effective on control of common reed.
- **Biological** - There is no known biological control for common reed, although goats are known to forage on many types of emergent vegetation.
- **Chemical** - The active ingredient that has been most successful in treating common reed is the herbicide, glyphosate.

References: http://www.vnps.org/invasive/invphrag.htm
http://aquaplant.tamu.edu